



SMILE SURVEY 2005

Key Findings

- Tooth decay remains a significant health problem in Skamania County, especially for low-income children.
- Two is too late for the prevention of tooth decay. To be effective, prevention programs should be targeted toward infants and toddlers.
- In the last decade, progress has been made in obtaining dental care for elementary school students.
- In the last five years, access to dental sealants, a proven method for preventing tooth decay, has decreased.
- In order to improve the oral health of children in Skamania County, we must continue to support and expand dental decay prevention programs including community water fluoridation, school-based dental sealant programs, fluoride varnish programs for preschool children, and the Access to Baby and Child Dentistry (ABCD) program.

ORAL HEALTH: AN IMPORTANT PART OF TOTAL HEALTH

Tooth decay is the single most common chronic disease of childhood, five times more common than asthma. Poor oral health and loss of teeth impacts speech, eating, self-esteem, social interaction, a child's ability to learn, and emotional state.

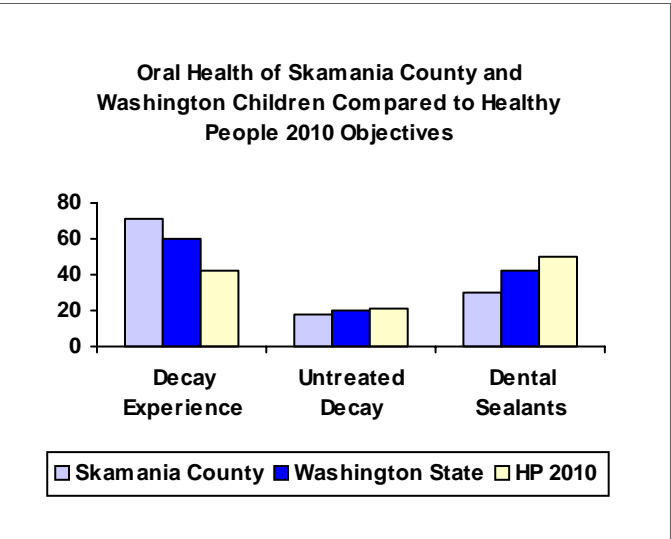
Of Skamania County's children enrolled in Head Start:

- ◆ 62% have experienced tooth decay
- ◆ 35% have untreated tooth decay

For 2nd and 3rd grade children in Skamania County:

- ◆ 71% have experienced tooth decay
- ◆ 18% have untreated tooth decay

Compared to Washington, a lower percentage of Skamania County's elemen-



The percent of 2nd and 3rd graders with decay experience, untreated decay and dental sealants in Skamania County and Washington compared to the Healthy People 2010 oral health objectives..

tary school children have untreated tooth decay; in fact, Skamania County has met the HP 2010 objective for untreated decay. Everyone should be congratulated on their efforts to obtain dental care for our children.

We must still make considerable progress, however, in reducing the percent of children with decay experience and increasing the number of children with access to preventive dental sealants.

TOOTH DECAY CAN BE PREVENTED

Although tooth decay is the most common chronic disease of childhood, it can be prevented. Community water fluoridation, topical fluoride treatments and dental sealants are among the best ways to prevent tooth decay. Unfortunately,

only 30% of Skamania County's 2nd and 3rd grade children have dental sealants, no one has access to a fluoridated water system, only a small portion of toddlers in Skamania County have access to topical fluoride programs,

and very few children are enrolled in the ABCD Program. In order to improve the oral health of our children, continued efforts must be made to assure that all children have access to these valuable preventive services.